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ABSTRACT

Education for peace is a process that must begin in the childhood of students and continue for the rest of their lives. Education for peace also is concerned with addressing the conditions that nurture violence and war and with seeking ways to change those conditions. Among the major themes of current peace education efforts are the aftermath of the Cold War, including the still existing threat of nuclear war; the North-South issue, including the southern hemisphere's deepening impoverishment; the problems posed by pollution and destruction of the environment; and the obstacles to the spread of human rights and social justice. Peace education also can be understood as a social learning process, including the development of individual skills such as empathy, and competence in communication. Thirteen items are suggested for further reading. (DB)

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EDUCATION FOR PEACE

Christoph Wulf

A premise of education for peace is that coming to grips with the major issues confronting humanity today must be part of a learning process beginning in childhood and continuing for the rest of one's life. Education for peace overlaps with approaches that pursue related goals, for example, international education, survival education, and education for world citizenship. Among major themes of current peace education are: the problems stemming from the earlier East-West conflict, with the nuclear threat that still confronts the human race; the North-South conflict; the problem posed by the pollution and destruction of the environment; the obstacles to a spread of human rights and social justice. Education for peace is not confined to passing on information; it can lead to changes in attitudes and political involvement. It can be understood as a social learning process, including the development of individual skills (empathy, communicational competence etc.). The present paper discusses these issues and various constellations of inherent problems, such as the relation between the macrolevel and microlevel, between reflection and action, and between form and content.

EDUCATION FOR PEACE

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Adequate education is not possible without reference to notions of a more just, more peaceful society. Among other things, education thus teaches one to cast a critical eye on existing conditions and to take seriously the responsibility of preparing future generations to improve them. Education dedicated to these ideas must also make reference to "peace" as an objective of social and individual development, and is therefore simultaneously education for peace. Seen in this way, "peace" must be a dimension of every form of education.

Premises

Nevertheless, it seems to make sense today to speak of education for peace in the narrower sense. Despite the recent developments in central and eastern Europe, the menace that war and violence pose to the human being has rarely been as great as it currently is. Peace has become *the* precondition for human life. The life of individuals, generations, and nations, indeed, the existence of the human race and perhaps even life per se, now depends on preserving or bringing about peace. It is thus essential that education also address the conditions nurturing war, violence, and material need and that it seek ways to help mitigate or even overcome them. Education for peace represents the attempt of education to assist in their elimination. It is recognized that many of those conditions are macrostructurally caused systemic problems, only some of which can be mitigated with the help of education. A premise of education for peace is that coming to grips with the major issues confronting humanity today must be part of a learning process beginning in childhood and continuing for the rest of one's life.

The Context and International Character of Education for Peace

Education for peace is taking place today in the United States; Japan; western, central and eastern Europe; as well as in many countries of the Third World. Naturally, the efforts in the various regions of the world

differ. In most countries of the Third World, education for peace is an attempt to further economic, social, national, and, in some cases, regional development. In the former socialist countries, all education was regarded in principle as education for peace because peace was said to be the objective of the historical development of socialist society. The fact that this was not the case is obvious, however. At present, peace is not a key concept of education in those countries. Nevertheless, many educational responsibilities arising from the transition away from the old social structures and from the violence inherent in them fall directly into the realm of education for peace. In the United States and western Europe, education for peace teaches adoption of a discerning perspective on one's own society and its role in the international system. Since the early 1980s, a link has thus formed between the international environmental movement and the peace movement. Education for peace overlaps with approaches that pursue related goals, though under different names. Common to them all is the attempt to have a part in educating the young generation. Some of these approaches differ only in their focus. They include education for international understanding, international education, survival education, global education, and education for world citizenship.

Peace Studies and Education for Peace

Education for peace is usually understood today as part of political socialization. It differs from earlier education in this sphere, the objective of which during the 1960s was to cultivate understanding between the peoples of the world and to instill thinking in terms of peace. Education for peace today also diverges from the approaches that started out from the idea that the human being in principle had a peace-loving nature, that this nature was threatened merely by aggression, and that peace was primarily a question of moral behavior. In addition, peace education today differs from efforts that, in recognition of the human being's aggressive drives, were geared to developing a sense of responsibility, teaching nonviolent behavior, and emphasizing the notion that personal yearning for peace and the actions taken by individuals on behalf of peace could lead to political peace. The idea that war began in the minds of people and had to be fought there was characteristic of this position. According to this view, the main thing was to change human consciousness in order to create the social conditions for a higher degree of justice. If the way to peace were through people's minds, then education for peace would logically acquire extraordinary significance.

In the early 1970s, however, peace studies showed that peace cannot be brought about by changes in human consciousness alone. The experience with the peace movement in recent years has confirmed this point. Belligerence and violence are so deeply anchored in social structures that they cannot be overcome solely by people's will to have peace. Concerted political action that diminishes the structures of violence in society and the international system is also necessary. Terms such as "organized belligerence" (Senghaas) and "structural violence" (Galtung) indicate that peace is a problem of bringing about change in social structures. Education can make only a limited, albeit important, contribution to solving that problem.

In the 1990s, too, education for peace must turn to key concepts like "organized belligerence", "structural violence", and "social justice". They make the social character of peace clear and guard against both the delusion of omnipotence and naive, simplistic interpretations of the problem. According to Galtung's key differentiation, peace is not understood only as the absence of war and direct violence (the negative concept of peace). Education for peace is seen instead as aiming to establish conditions under which the individual and society suffer the least possible amount of structural violence and, hence, enjoy a high degree of social justice (the positive concept of peace). Because of this understanding of peace, education focuses not only on war or direct violence between nations and in the international system but also on intrasocial conditions engendering violence, including elements of violence in family upbringing and formal schooling.

Goals, Content, and Forms

Education for peace is not a sphere that can be clearly delineated and defined, but a few major themes of current peace education can be identified:

- The problems stemming from the earlier East-West conflict, with the nuclear threat that still confronts the human race;
- The North-South conflict, with the southern hemisphere's deepening impoverishment due partially to the international, vertical division of labor;
- The problems posed by the pollution and destruction of the environment;
- The scarcity of natural resources and food;
- The population explosion;
- The obstacles to a spread of human rights and social justice.

Unless these problems are explicitly addressed in education, it will fail in its responsibility to prepare young people for the world of tomorrow.

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Education for peace does not live up to expectations if it is confined merely to passing on information about the spheres cited above. As important as such knowledge is, it is necessary to do more than simply convey it when treating these issues. The need is for a discerning debate that raises the level of concern and leads one to root out prejudices and hostility. In treating these issues, it is thus necessary for one to ask how hostility and prejudice are produced and what function they have in perpetuating structures of violence. Education for peace must therefore also make attitudes a subject of discussion and offer ways to examine them. It must encourage people to look at their patterns of life and give them opportunity to review their self-images in coming to grips with peace issues. If necessary, they can then eventually develop a modified self-concept that can help them to acquire a more profound understanding of the world and society.

To achieve peace-oriented learning that could prompt a corresponding willingness to take action, apathy and helplessness must be overcome, for they prevent empathy and involvement in such learning processes. One learning opportunity that can help dispel feelings of impotence is to see lack of experience in one's own life as a function of the great problems of the world. The insight that one's life is determined, indeed even threatened, by certain macrostructural formations of conflict instills the motivation to champion the cause of peace. Education can thereby succeed in doing more than merely transmitting knowledge – it can lead to changes in attitudes and to political involvement intended to bring about an altered kind of political action.

Education for peace has a structural problem. As education, it is directed to individuals or groups of individuals, in whose minds and attitudes it can effect lasting changes, but that does not necessarily mean that these changes will lead directly to potentially less violent social structures. Stamina and persistence are thus important aids in the work of educating people for peace. It is essential to complement it with practical policy and action pertaining to peace.

Education for peace requires certain modes of communication. It should promote nonviolent learning processes when possible, so it must develop primarily those kinds of learning that involve participative and self-initiated learning. In these learning processes, a major part of the initiative and responsibility must lie with the people at whom education for peace is aimed. They are encouraged to work out for themselves the various formations of conflict and, in doing so, to use imagination in ways relating to peace. Development of a historical sense of the origins of conflict situations and of

their fundamental malleability plays a key role in this regard, for it helps one design scenarios of change that are utopias yet also tempered by everyday experience. It also ensures an orientation to the future in consideration of issues and in education.

Education for Peace as a Social Learning Process

Education for peace must be understood as a social learning process in the course of which various formations of problems and conflicts can be addressed. It also involves the development of individual skills without which peace-oriented action is unlikely to succeed:

- Recognition of one's own self: Sensitivity in perceiving and dealing with one's own and others' feelings and attitudes.
- Recognition of one's own dependencies and those of society: Sensitivity in the perception of sociostructural dependencies; awareness of one's own situation in life; analysis of patterns of social relations in which the individual is integrated.
- Role distance: The ability to gain critical distance from social roles previously played and to express one's distance when acting out a role or to question closely and, if appropriate, modify the normative demands it entails.
- Empathy: The ability to project oneself into the expectations of one's social vis-à-vis and to show understanding for them.
- Tolerance for ambiguity: The ability to perceive and bear with others' equivocal situations and contradictory expectations, even if one's own needs are likely to go largely unmet.
- Communicational competence: The ability to articulate one's own needs and interests to others appropriately, that is, neither living entirely for nor completely ignoring the expectations of others but rather establishing one's own balance between various standpoints through a process of communication.

These abilities of the individual, which can be acquired through social learning in school, are prerequisites and elements of autonomous social action oriented to peace. The last four categories in particular describe relatively general competencies whose full import for peace education becomes clear only in interaction with the substantive questions and problems discussed above. Not until education for peace is understood and practiced as social learning can one develop a social competence for overcoming feelings of political impotence and apathy and for creating the disposition for peace-oriented action.

Target Groups

Education for peace can take place in many social institutions. It can begin in the family, in which the parents can model this type of learning for their children by giving attention in their daily lives to the problems of furthering the cause of peace. It can be made a subject of discussion in schools, adult education centers, and universities. Essentially, there are two basic ways this can happen. First, education for peace can take place by having the dimension of preserving and promoting peace included in a variety of topics. In this regard peace education is an instructional principle. Second, units of instruction on peace-related issues can be developed, tried out, and taught. Such units have their place, for example, in classes on civics, literature, and religion.

Education for peace can also be undertaken through the mass media – television, newspapers, magazines, and films. The possibilities vary largely according to the nature of the specific medium.

Finally, education for peace can take place in churches, political parties, unions, and grass-roots groups. The people who learn and become involved in these institutions are usually adults who have recognized that helping improve the conditions for peace is an obligation to the next generation. On the whole, the success of efforts on behalf of peace will depend primarily on the interaction between education, relevant scholarly research, and practical policies.

Conclusions

There are various constellations of insoluble problems inherent in education for peace.

- The relation between the *macrolevel* and *microlevel*: In education for peace, the polarity of these two levels must be endured and understood as a constitutive element. Work for peace must not be confined to the microlevel; and given the complexity of structures of violence at the macrolevel, neither may the importance of small advances at the microlevel be underestimated. The absorbing task of education for peace is to mediate beween the two levels.
- The relation between *reflection* and *action*: One aim of education for peace is to offer information and enlightenment about important topic areas influencing the life of the human race. One objective in this regard is to increase knowledge and, hence, the power of judgment. At the same time, education for peace is aimed at changing attitudes and building up the willingness to act for the sake of peace. It is even

aimed at prompting appropriate action itself. Conflicts obviously arise between the two objectives.

- The relation between *analysis* and *change*: Education for peace is an attempt to penetrate structures of violence with the insights of the critical mind. However, it cannot ignore the question of what a less violent world would look like. Education for peace must be prepared to design conditionally utopian scenarios for a more peaceful world and to appraise reality accordingly.
- The relation between *feeling* and *rationality*: Education for peace aims to engender concern and involvement, even partiality. Without them, the aspiration of preparing or even leading to political action cannot be met. Nevertheless, education for peace is subject to the norms of rationality, which commit one to see the pros and cons of one's own position and eliminate the uncertainties that this exercise gives rise to.
- The relation between *form* and *content*: Can learning processes relevant to peace occur under conditions of structural violence? Are closed institutions with highly prestructured forms of learning more suitable than others to the learning of things relevant to peace? Or do such structures corrupt that which is learned, thereby making it, too, a bearer of violence? If so, one would have to be reserved about school-related learning about peace and would have to shift learning about peace more to the extracurricular sphere. Or is it precisely an institution like the school that offers opportunities for learning about peace, particularly since relatively young people can be reached there? The answer to these questions remains open.

Education for peace can be understood as a sphere of educational work in which the tie to pedagogy, peace studies and conflict research, the peace movement, and peace policies is essential, but not so central that this field would lose its separate character.

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